

CONFIDENTIAL

ER 8-4531/a

16 July 1956

and
Honorable Carl Vinson/
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have read with close attention your letter of 10 July 1956 together with the enclosed excerpts from a letter which one of your colleagues has received regarding "the alleged relative effectiveness of intelligence work in the military services." It is my considered judgment that there is no serious basis to support the allegations in these excerpts.

For five years now I have been working closely with the Intelligence officers of all the military services including, of course, the Air Force. The Intelligence officers of the Air Force have impressed me as being, for the overwhelming part, highly competent and devoted officers. Under modern conditions and with the very particular capabilities of the Air Force in certain areas of highly sensitive and scientific collection methods, Air Force Intelligence has an extremely important role to play. I have never found that they withheld from us pertinent intelligence which they collected or that they slanted or misrepresented their analyses of intelligence. Our relations with Air Force Intelligence on a world-wide basis are close, particularly so here in Washington. In many of the fields of their particular competence we also have highly competent technicians to evaluate the raw material which they make available to us and reach our own conclusions.

What I say with regard to the Air Force also applies with regard to the Army and Navy Intelligence, with whom a highly cooperative basis of operations has been developed.

There is of course a natural, understandable and entirely human tendency on the part of the intelligence officers of a particular branch to stress the competence of a potential enemy in their particular field of interest. As an example, the Air Force would be inclined to give a higher potential rating to the Soviet air and nuclear capabilities than

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the Navy would. The same would apply to the Army and Navy Intelligence Services. Notwithstanding this, we have generally succeeded, in our National Intelligence Estimates, in reaching agreement on the appraisal of Soviet potential. When there are clear cut divergencies, those are stated in our Estimates so that the policy makers can see clearly where everyone stands. I consider this one of the important functions of the Central Intelligence Agency which has no vested interest in the views of any Service and, hence, has the opportunity of critically and, I trust, impartially reviewing the raw material which each Service collects.

I can assure you that this analysis is going forward in a cooperative and harmonious spirit as between this Agency and the Service agencies for whom I have the highest respect. If I should ever find an attempt to stunt intelligence, to suppress it, or withhold it, I would deal vigorously with the matter but so far I have not found this to be the case. I am inclined to believe that the correspondent from whose letter you quoted has been overly impressed by the natural and understandable Service emphases and may be ignorant of the full extent and nature of the contribution made in the intelligence field by the Air Force.

I appreciate your action in bringing this matter to my attention. I have not mentioned it to the Air Force or to any of the other Service Intelligence agencies or consulted them with respect to this letter. If you feel that any useful purpose would be gained by doing so, I should gladly undertake this. I did not wish to do so without your prior knowledge and consent.

In view of the frank nature of this answer to your interesting letter, and the fact that it deals with certain classified matters, I suggest that it remain for the confidential use of yourself, and, if you desire, your small sub-committee which deals with intelligence matters and possibly the Member of Congress who has forwarded the particular excerpts on which I am commenting.

Faithfully yours,

SIGNED

Allen W. Dulles
Director

AWD/c

Distribution:

Orig & 1 cc--addressee

1 cc--DCI x/

1 cc--ER w/ basic

2 cc--Legislative Counsel

1- [Signature]

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

15 July 1956

Honorable Carl Vinson
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have read with close attention your letter of 10 July 1956 together with the enclosed excerpts from a letter which one of your colleagues has received regarding "the alleged relative effectiveness of intelligence work in the military services." It is my considered judgment that there is no serious basis to support the ~~the~~ allegations. For five years now I have been working closely with all the military services including, of course, the ~~service of the~~ Air Force. The Intelligence Officers of the Air Force have impressed me as being, for the overwhelming part, highly competent and devoted officers. Under modern conditions and with the very particular capabilities of the Air Force in certain areas of highly sensitive and scientific collection methods, Air Force Intelligence has an extremely important role to play. I have never found that they withheld from us ~~available~~ intelligence which they collected or that they slanted or misrepresented their analyses of intelligence. Our relations with Air Force Intelligence on a world-wide basis are close, particularly so here in Washington. In many of the fields of their particular competence we also have highly competent technicians to evaluate the raw material ~~that~~ they make available and reach our own conclusions.

What I say with regard to the Air Force also applies with regard to the Army and Navy Intelligence, with whom a high cooperative basis of operations has developed.

There is of course a natural, understandable and entirely human tendency on the part of the intelligence officers of a particular branch to stress the competence of a ~~particular enemy~~ in their particular field of interest. As an example, the Air Force would be inclined to give a higher potential rating to the Soviet air and nuclear capabilities than the Navy would, ~~and~~ The same would apply ~~vice versa~~ to the Army and Navy Intelligence Services. Notwithstanding this, we have ~~very largely been able~~

Intelligence
Service
succeeded,
in
in our National Estimates, to reach agreement on the appraisal of ~~the~~ Soviet potential. ~~For example,~~ When there are clear cut divergencies, those are clearly stated in our Estimates so that the policy makers can see clearly where everyone stands. I consider this one of the important functions of the Central Intelligence Agency which has no vested interest in the views of any Service and, hence, has the opportunity of critically and, I trust, impartially reviewing the raw material which each collects. I can assure you that this is going forward in a cooperative and harmonious spirit as between this Agency and the Service agencies for whom I have the highest respect. If I should ever find an attempt to slant intelligence, to suppress it, or withhold it, I would deal vigorously with the matter but so far I have not found this to be the case. I am inclined to believe that the correspondent from whose letter you quoted has been overly impressed by the natural and ~~not improper~~ Service rivalries and may be ignorant of the full extent and nature of the contribution made in this field by the Air Force.

Intelligence
I appreciate your action in bringing this matter to my attention. I have not mentioned it to the Air Force or to any of the other Service *Intelligence* agencies or consulted them with respect to this letter. If you feel that any useful purpose would be gained by doing so, I should gladly undertake this. I did not wish to do so without your prior knowledge and consent.

analysis
In view of the frank nature of this answer to your interesting letter, and the fact that it deals with certain classified matters, I suggest that it remain for the confidential use of yourself, and, if you desire, your small sub-committee which deals with intelligence matters and possibly the Member of Congress who has forwarded the particular excerpts on which I am commenting.

Faithfully yours,

Understandable
Allen W. Dulles
Director
emphases

13 July 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

SUBJECT: Attached Letter of 10 July 1956 from
Chairman Vinson

1. This memorandum suggests action on the part of the DCI. Such requested action is contained in paragraph 2.

2. Mr. Amory has read the attached letter, and feels that this is a matter you may wish to take up with General Lewis at the next opportunity, possibly after the IAC meeting next Tuesday. You will note that the Air Force is the main subject of attack, although there is some criticism of CIA. Mr. Amory suggests, and I agree, that there is no need to reply to this letter until after you have had an opportunity to at least discuss the matter informally with General Lewis.



Norman S. Paul
Legislative Counsel

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Attachment

Ltr from Chairman Vinson
dated 10 July 1956

EIGHTY-FOURTH CONGRESS

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PHILIP W. KELLEHER, VA.
COUNSEL

July 10, 1956

Honorable Allen W. Dulles
Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Dulles:

A Member of Congress has extracted excerpts from a letter which he has received and forwarded them to me for my comment. These excerpts are attached for your information, and concern, as you will note, the alleged relative effectiveness of intelligence work in the military services.

Obviously, we are unable to evaluate these allegations, but I can hardly overlook the statement that Air Force intelligence officers have distorted certain critical intelligence information included in reports that were presented to senior Air Force officers at the policy making level.

If there is any possibility that there is any substance in an allegation of this nature, corrective action is in order. The purpose of this communication is to determine whether or not you have any information which will permit you to affirm or refute this allegation.

Sincerely yours,


Carl Vinson
Chairman

Enclosure